

well be that different types of aid will be necessary if we are to keep the few remaining farmers in Maryland.

I would submit also that the present constitutional proposal is a limiting one in that it limits aid to the farmer in terms of proposing specifically aid on the property tax. Other types of taxes we will see in the future will probably be much greater than the property tax is today and can be as severely dangerous to the farmer, yet if this type of aid remains in the constitution as farm relief, the General Assembly may be reluctant to move in other areas in the future.

I would further point out that much of the land in Montgomery County is not held by Montgomery County people but is held by absentee land owners by people, by out-of-state syndicates which range from Texas to North Carolina that Maryland is now in the process of giving them, if you will, a free ride.

I would suggest that it is time to plug this loop hole. We talk about equalization of taxes and equalization of sharing the burden and this is a very accepted thing in our county. We are perfectly willing to do this. But we need your help in order to do it.

Do not tie our hands from raising money from our own sources and allowing money to go out of the State. Help us to raise the money from the land speculators instead of the home owners in Montgomery County.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does any other delegate desire to speak in opposition to the amendment?

Delegate Weidemeyer.

DELEGATE WEIDEMEYER: Mr. President and members of the Convention, even though the Committee went against me yesterday, I must be with them all today.

Mr. President, there have been many things pointed out by Delegates Case and Sherbow in favor of the Committee Recommendation 8.02 as written, but in addition to that, there is this particular circumstance. The people of Maryland considered it when they voted overwhelmingly to give some special tax treatment to assessment of farms. The first thing I believe as a rule the farmers of Maryland, as Delegate Rosenstock said, are overtaxed already in proportion to the earnings the farmers will produce.

There is this, that if these farmers have their assessment raised to the point where

they are forced to sell to speculators, what happens? As soon as a subdivision goes on one farm five or ten miles away from that subdivision the assessors get the idea that farms down the line are all worth the same value. If the farmers are forced to sell, it means an onrush of speculators and some of these speculators are buying a \$100,000 place or \$50,000 place with \$5,000 down. Either the farmer is carrying the load on the mortgage or else some bank or building association is financing it.

If the speculator cannot make it on the farm and the farm is not ready for subdivision, the speculator goes bankrupt or the place is sold on mortgage sale and your banks and banking institutions in which you all invested your funds stand to take the loss. Those are the things that have not been brought out. I thought I ought to bring them out to you because it is not only the farmer we are saving in this process, we are helping to save ourselves.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Chabot.

DELEGATE CHABOT: Mr. Chairman, the legislature acted in the 1950's without a constitutional mandate to try to meet the problem of the farmers and as Delegate Weidemeyer has aptly pointed out, fought the problem of all of us. It acted not only without a constitutional mandate to act but apparently according to the Court of Appeals in the face of a constitutional prohibition to act.

Now, what would be the situation with that background if this amendment were adopted? We would have a provision in the Constitution which still has the effect of overruling, I submit, the original Gayle's case which caused the people to approve an amendment in 1960 and would overrule the Alsop case. It would free the legislature to act to meet the problem and I am sure that this legislature will do its very best to meet the problem within the limitations that the Constitution imposes upon them.

What is the situation if this amendment is defeated. Are any limitations imposed upon the legislature? Can the legislature be free to meet the problem of the farmers who have land that ends up being worth more for speculative purposes to the builder than it is for farming purposes? I suggest to you most reluctantly that the answers that have been provided to us this morning have indicated quite clearly that the legislature cannot act both to meet the needs of the farmers and also to stop the speculators from getting a windfall from riding in on